4:Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952) 58 AWll Kerala AWll
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like the cult of lineage ghosts, are non-Sanskritic. I discuss the three categories of cults in that order, and then refer briefly to modern changes in the cults.

The Cult of Lineage Ghosts

Each traditional Nāyar house contains a room devoted to lineage ghosts. Within the shrine are placed small, low stools (*pīthams*). On each of these it is believed that a particular ghost comes to sit on the days when offerings are made.

In property groups of the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and district-chiefs, which own more land than do commoner Nāyars, family histories recorded in palm leaf documents may contain the names and achievements of twenty or more *kāranavans* extending back over two or three hundred years. In such lineages, whose property groups divide less frequently than do those of commoner Nāyars, the *kāranavans'* spirits are housed in a special building in the courtyard south of the ancestral house. Commoner Nāyars care somewhat less for their ancestry. Sometimes they have only three or four stools for their lineage ghosts and remember by name only those who died within the last hundred years or whose lives were in some way remarkable. Remarkable *kāranavans* are those who fought bravely in battles or received honor from chief or king, those who earned property on behalf of their matrilineal groups, or those who died prematurely through accident, murder, epidemic or suicide.

Regular offerings are made only to *kāranavans*, for only *kāranavans* hold legal authority and only their names tend to appear in documents which survive for posterity. On the advice of the astrologer, however, a *taravād* may, in emergency, propitiate the ghost of an ancestress or of a man who died before becoming *kāranavan*. But such ghosts are always those who died within the lifetime of living members.

The lineage ghosts are regularly propitiated[5] on the new-moon days of Karkidagam (July-August) and Tulām (October-November). Food is cooked in the kitchen by women of the matrilineal household, and a large portion is placed on a plantain leaf for each of the ghosts. It includes curried meat and vegetables, fried paddy, beaten rice, fuits, and sweet puddings of various kinds. Toddy and arrack were traditionally served along with the meal. If a dead *kāranavan* is known to have enjoyed special foods during life, he receives a large portion of these foods. Occasionally, even in the past, individual Nāyars have been vegetarians. The spirits of vegetarian *kāranavans* may not be served with meat and are housed in a separate shrine. When the dishes are prepared, they are carried quickly to the shrine so that the ghosts may partake of their essence before others have tasted or smelled them. The living *kāranavan* places the leaves before the stools in the presence of men junior to him in the property group and then closes the door of the shrine. Age-rank is observed in making the offerings. For each spirit, in addition to its own leaf, is briefly offered the food later placed before the stools of spirits junior to it. Similarly, the vegetables of vegetarian ghosts are first offered to meat eaters who were senior to them, and the vegetables (but not the meat) cooked for meat eating ghosts are first offered to vegetarian ghosts who were their seniors. After a few minutes the *kāranavan* reopens the door and distributes the food, to be eaten by all members of the *taravād*. Women take no part in offering the food and may not enter the ancestral shrine on this day. They are also forbidden to enter it during menstrual and birth pollutions, and all members are forbidden entry during the fifteen days of pollution following a death.

Traditionally, at the close of offerings to the ghosts, men of the *taravād* might

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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(shouts of joy by females). The females of the neighbouring houses, and of the families of friends and relatives, visit her. New cloths are presented to the girl by her near relatives. On the third day the villagers, friends and relatives are treated to a luncheon of rice and milk pudding. Early in the morning on the fourth day, the Mannans or Vêlans appear. The girl is anointed with oil, and tender leaves of the cocoanut palm are tied round the head and waist. In the company of maidens she is brought out of the room, and the Vêlans sing certain songs. Thence the party move on to the tank, where the girl wears a cloth washed by a Vêlan, and takes a bath. After the bath the Vêlans again sing songs. In the afternoon, the girl is taken out by the females invited for the occasion to an ornamental pandal, and the Vêlans, standing at a distance, once more sing. With the usual distribution of pân-supâri, sandal and jasmine flowers, the ceremony closes. In the midst of the song, the female guests of the village, the wives of friends and relatives, and most of the members of the family itself, present each a small cloth to the Vêlans. They are also given a small amount of money, rice, betel leaf, etc. The guests are then entertained at a feast. In some places, the girl is taken to a separate house for the bath on the fourth day, whence she returns to her house in procession, accompanied by tom-toms and shouting. In the northern tâluks, the Vêlan's song is in the night, and the performance of the ceremony on the fourth day is compulsory. In the southern tâluks, it is often put off to some convenient day. Before the completion of this song ceremony, the girl is prohibited from going out of the house or entering temples."

It is provided, by the Malabar Marriage Act, 1896, that, " when a sambandham has been registered in the manner

585 217 656 therein laid down, it shall have the incidence of a legal marriage; that is to say, the wife and children shall be entitled to maintenance by the husband or father, respectively, and to succeed to half his self-acquired property, if he dies intestate; while the parties to such a sambandham cannot register a second sambandham during its continuance, that is, until it is terminated by death or by a formal application for divorce in the Civil Courts. The total number of sambandhams registered under the Act has, however, been infinitesimal, and the reason for this is, admittedly, the reluctance of the men to fetter their liberty to terminate sambandham at will by such restrictions as the necessity for formal divorce, or to undertake the burdensome responsibility of a legal obligation to maintain their wife and offspring. If, as the evidence recorded by the Malabar Marriage Commission tended to show, 'a marriage law in North Malabar, and throughout the greater part of South Malabar, would merely legalise what is the prevailing custom,' it is hard to see why there has been such a disinclination to lend to that custom the dignity of legal sanction." * The following applications to register sambandhams under the Act were received from 1897 to 1904 :—

[586] 585 187 656

	Nayars.	Tiyans.	Others.	Total.
1897	28	6	2	36
1898	8	2	4	14
1899	8	2	4	14
1900	8	..	9	17
1901	3	...	1	4
1902	...	...	...	...
1903	2	...	...	2
Total ...	57	10	20	87

* Gazetteer of Malabar.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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873 Of the two B.L.'s I mentioned, one is the District Magistrate in the State, another is a Pleader; of the graduates one is in the Government service in British India on a pay of Rs. 35, and the rest are still continuing their further studies.

871 217 Except the Royal Readers and text-books which pupils buy for their school course there are not very many good English books in the village. A few of us have tried to start a reading-room and library for the English-reading public, but it is only a beginning. But good Malayalam books are common.

No description of village-education would be complete without noting those silent yet effective forces of culture which make a Hindu home what it is, so sweet, so hospitable, and so pious.

545 The village is often visited by a troupe of 'players' who put on the stage Puranic stories in the form of pantomimes and *natakas* or dramas. The celebrated Malabar pantomime is known as *Kathakali*. A big landlord, or ruling chief, forms a troupe of players and sends them abroad, just after the rainy season is over. This troupe comes to a village, and a well-to-do and influential man in the village is expected to make arrangements for a performance. The expenses of the troupe for that day together with a small donation, which seldom exceeds Rs. 10, are to be paid by that person, and the villagers can witness the performance free of charge. The reputation of the man who has started the troupe, generally a big zamindar or a ruling chief, goes a long way in canvassing persons willing to meet the expenses of the play in a village. Sometimes the pantomime takes place in the local temple and the *devaswom* authorities are bound to meet the daily expenses of the players. This troupe travels from place to place and returns at the end of the season to the place from which it started and the members engage themselves in their respective occupations, generally agriculture, or as servants to the landlord who formed the troupe. The same round is repeated in the next season.

538 There are also various ways of teaching broadcast the Puranic lore such as *chakiyar kooth*, *ottam thullal*, etc.

In a *chakiyar kooth*, the *chakiyar* recites certain Sanskrit *slokas* illustrative of stories from the Puranas and interprets them with wit and humour in such an excellent fashion that there will not be one in the audience who does not stretch his sides with laughter. In an *ottam thullal*, the person recites with appropriate gestures verses composed in short Malayalam metre dealing with Puranic stories. These are usually performed on the occasion of festivals in temples.

The above institutions are indigenous to Malabar. Among the Tamil Brahmans, a travelling *Sastrigal* often visits a village and reads Puranic stories in Sanskrit in the local temple and interprets them in Tamil so that the men and women in the village may understand them. At the time of his departure a decent sum is subscribed and paid to him.

In every decent home, a member of the family reads stories from the Puranas to the other inmates in the vernacular. All the people listen with rapt attention and sometimes engage in a lively discussion. Tamil Brahman ladies usually learn by heart Puranic stories in the shape of songs which they recite every

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
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the brother or son, in the case of a Nayar the sister's son succeeds. The Travancore and Cochin royal families and the Zamorin family descend in the female line.

Water-supply.—Drinking water is supplied by the wells. Every house has one. The sinking of wells is easy here since the soil is loose and there is no rock and the height above the sea level is not much. Wealthy people build the well with granite, others leave it with mud banks. The labourers dig their wells themselves as it involves only two days' work. The wells never dry up. There are three public wells and two temple wells besides. Indeed the scarcity of water is not felt at all. But for bathing purposes the water in the tank is bad, and some people use well-water for the same. The quality of the well-water is fairly good.

Education.—There are seven schools of which one is a secondary school managed by the Taluk Board, one is a Government Girls' School and the other five are elementary schools, one being Muhammadan. There are 680 boys and 185 girls in attendance.

The education imparted is fairly satisfactory, special stress being laid onthe vernacular. According to the educational curriculum prescribed by the Director, the geography of the district, a little Indian History, a good training in the vernacular, a little Arithmetic, and the beginning of English by teaching the alphabet and small words, are all taught in the school.

Eighty per cent of the men and fifteen per cent of the women can read and write the vernacular; about two per cent can read and write English, and somewhat fewer speak it.

Forty boys have left the village and had a college course, and there is one girl matriculate.

About 20 boys after undergoing a little commercial training at Calicut have gone to Bombay and other commercial centres for employment.

It may here be mentioned that emigration to Ceylon is frequent. Emigrants return after three or four years, and remain in the village for one year, and again go to Ceylon. Nearly 150 have gone within recent years.

The only library in the village is the secondary school library which contains nearly 200 books, all juvenile. Five or six private persons possess some books. Some are lawyers and their books are connected with law. Others have only novels. Nobody takes study seriously. Nobody is interested in Science as a subject. This lack of enthusiasm for knowledge makes the Indian less original and less artistic. I know nobody in my village who has designed new arts or invented anything at all. This lack is everywhere visible in India and seen even among students who do not care to know anything more than those things which are prescribed for the examination. This fundamental weakness must be shamefully confessed, but there are signs of change in the right direction.

Village administration.—The head of the village is the *adhigari* or the village munsif. He is the representative of the King-Emperor. He collects the revenue, looks after the affairs of the village, has the jurisdiction over minor civil and criminal cases, controls the roads, Government lands and trees and other public places—in fact he represents every function, in a greater or lesser degree, of the King-Emperor, and is the guardian of the public peace. He must

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includes hardly any females. Some 12 per cent can write the vernacular. Nearly one per cent can talk and read and write English. There are some ten pandits or others who have made a special study of grammar, logic and rhetoric, medicine, astronomy and astrology, all according to Sanskrit works. Two are able Sanskrit scholars, both Brahmans. All the Brahman scholars—some four in all—are well versed in Vedic lore. But no one cares nowadays for such learning, and in consequence their scholarship is miserably inadequately rewarded. They have given up the idea of bringing up their sons in their own fashion and instead send them to English schools. There is one boy in Madras in the Presidency College and some eight others in colleges in Calicut and Palghat, reading in the High School or college classes.

Most of the Brahman boys proceed to advanced schools; there are about ten such now. No Brahman girls proceed to higher schools. But with the advent of an elementary school in the village, they attend that. Formerly they learnt at home or in pial schools with boys. Social difficulties stand in the way of their advanced study. Non-Brahman boys also now go in small numbers to advanced schools. They number not more than a dozen, and none of them has reached a high standard.

One or two of the more advanced students get scholarships covering the school fees; all of them manage with great difficulty to defray their expenses, by borrowing money at high rates of interest, by starting what are called "Kuris," i.e., loans which are paid back by instalments; by selling any property they possess, etc. There is no one in the village who can easily maintain his son at school. Fathers, however, spend their all on their sons' education, hoping that they will get remunerative employment afterwards.

A few boys from the village who have passed through secondary schools have obtained small jobs; none has a good situation. Poorly paid schoolmasters, railway employees and clerks make up the list of the small number of such persons—not more than a dozen. It is more and more difficult for persons who have not got high educational qualifications to get suitable employment. Boys of the village who have received a secondary education and cannot proceed further complain of getting no satisfactory work and having to stay at home or return to their old occupations, which they have very likely neglected and forgotten during their school life. So farmers complain that such education is no good to their sons and we can say nothing in reply, unless we can guarantee situations for the educated. "What is the use of all this fine education," they ask, "if it does not procure a living and makes the boys unfit for what work they know? We would much rather keep them at home to stick to that work and earn a living." How can one urge the cultural and other benefits of education in the face of this practical argument? The quality and kind of education must be improved, made more practical and a better preparation for life.

There are some private libraries of Sanskrit books and palm-leaf manuscripts with the pandits numbering perhaps some 500 in all. The school has a little library where magazines (in the vernacular) and books (English and vernacular) to the number of about 100 are kept. Some of the more advanced students—there are only two or three—have small libraries of English books.

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217 text-books and general literature. Most Nayar families have Malayalam translations of the Ramayana, etc., which they read during the midday rest from work, i.e., one member of the house who can read, reads aloud to others. There cannot be more than a hundred Malayalam books. The Brahman ladies own a few song books and story books in Tamil.

624 *Village administration.*—There is no panchayat. There seems to be scope for one, and educated men are not wanting. The general administration of the village is in the hands of the village munsif or adhikari, who is assisted by the karnam. The adhikari represents the Government in all matters. The village 625 officers can send for the police from the nearest police station— 674 4 miles away. There is no regular police quartered in the village. But there is no need for any. The villagers are not prone to criminal acts and nuisances are not committed. The villagers are terribly afraid of the police too. Above the village officers is the Tahsildar of the taluk, who checks all their acts. Occasionally the Tahsildar or his deputy pays a visit to the village and is warmly welcomed by the prominent landlords. Revenue Inspectors and Land Records Tahsildars also visit the village to verify and check the village accounts. There has been no serious crime of any sort within recent years. Petty thefts are occasionally heard of particularly when corn is very dear and many of the poor actually starve.

691 Of late there is a growing tendency towards litigation, especially among half-educated people. Most of the cases are civil causes involving small sums of property. The object may be to recover unpaid debts, long arrears of rent, etc., or to establish claims to property where such are disputed. Most litigation has relation to the possession or tenancy of land and other property rights. [627] The chief landlords have a power—resting upon their position, dignity and tradition—of settling small civil disputes between their tenants. The tenants dare not transgress their wishes. So arbitration by the janmi may settle many disputes, especially civil ones. Many cases are also settled amicably by the intervention of respectable and trustworthy persons of the village. The village munsif has jurisdiction in petty cases. But in all these cases the tendency is to resort more and more to the courts. But persons who have experience of them complain of the worries of litigation, even if successful in the end. This is a strong restraining influence.

178 *History and prospects of village.*—There seems to be clear 511 evidence of economic deterioration, though in some respects there is slight improvement. Thus, many families which were once well-to-do have been reduced to abject poverty or very adverse circumstances. It is inconceivable that this is due, in all or most cases, to individual folly or vices. There is not a proportionate increase of persons of the well-to-do classes when compared with other classes. The head "others" in the Census report is steadily growing, while the numbers of landholders and labourers (i.e., agricultural workers) are decreasing.* This, in a village where

* [This is chiefly due to a change in the system of classification.—Ed.]